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ABSTRACT

The Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) Symposium was held to integrate the insights gained from findings emerging from the research component and the implementation of the teacher training programs of the Assessment of Language Proficiency of Bilingual Persons (ALPBP) project. This final report on the symposium consists of three component reports. The first, "Issues in the Assessment of Language Proficiency of Language Minority Students," by C. Rivera and C. Simich, is an analysis of the literature and research in the area of language proficiency assessment. The second article is a summary of symposium presentations. These two reports provide documentation regarding the state of the art of language proficiency assessment and summarize research issues which need to be further documented. The third component report is a proposed plan for public dissemination of the symposium proceedings. (Author/AMH)

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ALPBP Project
Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) Symposium

Literature Review
LPA Symposium Summary
&
Publication and Dissemination Plan for the LPA Symposium Proceedings

Final Report - January 29, 1982

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The Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) Symposium

The Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) Symposium, held March 14 - 18, 1981, at Airlie House in Warrenton, Virginia was planned and implemented as part of the ALPBP project. The LPA Symposium represented a major effort toward integrating both the insights gained from findings emerging from the research component and the implementation of the teacher training programs of the ALPBP project. The Symposium provided a forum where a broad spectrum of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers met to discuss the major issues and research findings which affect language proficiency assessment practices. The Symposium also provided a structure for participants to make practical recommendations directed at influencing federal and state policies regarding language proficiency assessment research and practices. Another objective of the Symposium was to encourage the participants to develop a network of communication for the purposes of exchanging information and incorporating this knowledge into their areas of responsibility.

Researchers were represented by scholars involved in the development of models of communicative competence, related empirical research, and the development and validation of tests of language proficiency and/or communicative competence. Practitioners included teachers and school administrators engaged in the implementation of programs which require the application of language proficiency assessment strategies. Policymakers were individuals who play an important role in the funding of educational research projects related to language proficiency assessment and who are influential in the establishment of policy in this area.

The participants interacted through the presentation of papers, reactions to presentations, and informal discussions. The main goals of the Symposium were selected by the organizers based on a survey of concerns of researchers and educators. The goals were:

- to develop a working definition of communicative competence/ language proficiency;
- to make recommendations for the assessment of language minority students for the purpose of entry/exit into appropriate educational programs; and
- to develop an agenda for future research based on present and past research.

The issues in the area of language proficiency assessment ranged from theoretical questions regarding the nature of communicative competence to the application of research findings. Central to the discussion of language proficiency assessment was the acknowledged need to clarify the nature and scope of communicative competence and its relationship to language proficiency. Topics of discussion in this regard included research findings concerning the nature of children's language use and the role of first and second language in the learning of literacy-related skills.

Language tests and testing methods were also topics addressed by the participants. Questions were raised as to what these tests should be measuring and why. Many of the participants were concerned with the issue of reliability of currently-used language proficiency assessment instruments as well as with the development of new, more appropriate measures. A multi-disciplinary approach to language proficiency assessment and the development of more innovative methods of language testing was supported by participants. An approach of this type would utilize information from such areas as psychology,

anthropology, and linguistics, thus providing the opportunity to gain insights from different perspectives into patterns of language use and related topics. A sociolinguistic/ethnographic perspective to language proficiency assessment, for example, was one of the unique approaches which was examined at the Symposium.

The implications of new research findings on the establishment of government policy, and in particular, of federal guidelines in the area of language proficiency assessment, was a topic which most of the participants believed required serious consideration. Since language proficiency assessment practices are currently undergoing a period of change and reevaluation, it was suggested that the federal government, in revising the LAU guidelines, provide a means of incorporating new research findings regarding the nature of language which have implications for assessing minority students.

The LPA Symposium report consists of three component reports. The first is an analysis of the literature and research in the area of language proficiency assessment and is found in the article: Issues in the Assessment of Language Proficiency of Language Minority Students, by Charlene Rivera and Carmen Simich. The second is a summary of symposium presentations. These two reports provide important documentation regarding the state of the art of language proficiency assessment. In addition, they summarize research issues which need to be further documented. The third component report is a publication dissemination plan for the symposium proceedings which are to be published through the Center for Applied Linguistics.

Issues in the Assessment of Language Proficiency of Language Minority Students

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Passage of the Bilingual Education Act in 1968, the upholding of the Lau vs. Nichols decision in 1974, and the subsequent "Remedies" Task Force of 1975 have focused attention on the identification of language minority students based on their English language proficiency. The legal assumption, as seen through the Remedies, is that it is possible to measure language minority students' language proficiency and, based on this assessment, to make recommendations for their placement in monolingual, English as a Second Language (ESL), and/or Bilingual Education programs.

Thecretically, this approach appears reasonable. In application, however, the Lau mandate has proven difficult to implement. While it is generally acknowledged that a person's proficiency in a language falls along a continuum from non-speaker to proficient speaker of a language, research has not provided evidence which would allow valid and reliable weighting of language skills as indicators of different levels of language proficiency. Educators have generally relied on available language proficiency measures in search for viable alternatives for assessing language proficiency. However, available instruments in general have not proven to be psychometrically or linguistically reliable and valid (Rosansky, 1981). Many of the

instruments most commonly used in bilingual programs, when administered to the same students, place them at varying levels of proficiency (Gillmore & Dickerson, 1979; Ulibarri, Spencer & Rivas, 1980). Moreover, the constructs of language being measured are not necessarily compatible (Rodriguez-Brown, 1981).

The issues of language assessment and placement raise several important questions which are the focus of this article.

- What are the basic premises upon which current language assessment instruments have been developed?
- What is the state of the art in language proficiency assessment?
- What implications do current research findings have for language proficiency assessment?

What are the Basic Premises Upon Which Current Language Assessment Instruments Have Been Developed?

Directions in the development of assessment measures have been greatly influenced by developments in psychology and linguistics. Thus, in responding to the issue of basic premises upon which current language proficiency measures are based, it is necessary to review salient contributions from these disciplines.

The behavioristic conceptualizations of learning as evidenced in structural linguistic theory (Bloomfield, 1933) was a major force in language testing in the mid 1900's. From a behaviorist perspective, structuralists came to view language as a set of conditioned responses

to external stimuli. They described language as consisting of several components -- phonology, morphology, syntax and the lexicon. The emphasis of linguistic research was to provide a detailed description of these components.

The influence of psychometric methodology and structural linguistic theory promoted a scientific orientation to the measurement of language proficiency. Language assessment came to be viewed as an objective process which must be reliable and valid (Spolsky, 1978). The common practice in developing language assessment measures was to isolate and measure discrete language components. Lado's classic book Language Testing: The Construction and Use of Foreign Language Tests (1961) is an excellent example of this perspective.

An increased pressure to provide foreign language education to the military, a result of World War II, prompted the development of foreign language methodology and teaching materials. Both were greatly influenced by structuralist/behaviorist approaches. Oral language was considered primary and teaching a foreign language was based on repetition of drills and exercises where the learning of discrete components of language was emphasized.

Carroll (1952) was one of the first researchers to voice dissatisfaction with this approach. He suggested that language be considered more than the sum of its discrete parts, and that its measurement be regarded as an integrative process with an emphasis on the "total communicative

effect of an utterance". These concepts are basic to later developments in psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics.

A brief review of psycholinguistic theory is essential to understand the rationale underlying the integrative or holistic testing trend. One interpretation of psycholinguistics is based on Chomsky's (1965) generative linguistic theory, which postulates that a grammar should have descriptive, as well as explanatory adequacy; that is, it should explain the mental processes underlying a speaker-hearer's ability to produce and understand his or her language.

Influenced by Chomsky's ideas, current psycholinguistic research has concentrated on two basic areas. One has focused on explaining the mental processes a native speaker uses to convert the deep structure of sentences, or the speaker-hearer's competence, into surface structures in spoken language, or the speaker-hearer's performance (Ingram, 1978). The second area has focused on first and second language acquisition research (Ritchie, 1978; McLaughlin, 1978) which has been influenced by the belief that children are born with an innate knowledge of language universals (Chomsky, 1965).

In recent years, Chomsky's ideas have been challenged by generative linguists who claim that the central component of language is semantic rather than syntactic. Focus of research in this area has been on the processes speakers-hearers use to perceive, interpret, store and retrieve linguistic information when needed during communication.

Other challenges to Chomsky's theories have been posed by pragmatists (Oller, 1978, 1979), who claim that language cannot be studied as a self-contained system. Oller defines pragmatic facts of language as those aspects "having to do with the relations between linguistic units, speakers and extralinguistic facts" (Oller, 1970, p. 99). In summary, psycholinguistic research has been greatly influenced by generative theory, and the need for a better understanding of the manner in which speakers-hearers process language.

Several attempts have been made to develop tests based on generative linguistic theory. One such attempt is represented by the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (Pimsleur, 1966). Another is represented by Briere's (1972) incorporation of a transformational subtest as part of a battery of tests developed to measure the language proficiency of Native American children. In general, however, attempts to apply transformational-generative theory to language teaching and testing have not been successful. Ingram (1978) indicates that this situation may be due to the fact that educators have not found, and researchers have not offered, practical applications which are relevant and meaningful in instructional settings.

The influence of pragmatics on language proficiency testing is evidenced in the widespread us of cloze and dictation tests (e.g., Oller, 1979; Oller & Hinofotis, 1980; Wilson, 1980). Both are based on an integrative approach to measuring language proficiency.

Sociolinguistic research highlights the difficulty of measuring language via discrete quantifiable means. Shuy points out that the most critical aspects of language "are the ones least susceptible to quantification" (1977, p. 77-78). In general, instruments of language proficiency measure easily quantifiable components of language such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar rather than those less visible or quantifiable, such as meaning or the functional intent of utterances. Use of discrete point language assessment instruments does not provide valid and accurate information about how effectively students participate in instructional settings. Thus, the sociolinguistic approach promotes evaluation of the appropriate use of language in different communicative situations. Its contribution to the development of language proficiency assessment instruments is based on a broader interpretation of language which includes the use of linguistic code(s) by participants in ways which are acceptable to other members of a speech community.

Studies in language variation have expanded the idea of the linguistic repertoire of speech communities (Gumperz, 1972). Applied to language proficiency assessment, this concept supports the view that minority students' language proficiency should not be measured against the "standard" dialect of a language. Rather, a student's way of speaking should be considered adequate and appropriate in terms of the purposes it serves during communication. For example, in the southwest, where large numbers of Hispanic students live, code-switching

incidences are common. This manner of communication should be considered appropriate given its functional use within the community.

If we take the position that students' language should not be measured against a standard dialect, then we need to ask: why measure language proficiency?

The measurement of language proficiency is necessary to provide teachers with an understanding of the language skills students have already acquired in the home environment. A comparison between home language skills and functional language demands in the classroom setting will provide necessary information upon which to place students in appropriate educational programs.

More recent sociolinguistic research relates functional language use to language proficiency. Shuy defines functional language use as "the underlying knowledge that allows people to make utterances in order to accomplish goals and to understand the utterances of others in terms of their goals. It includes a knowledge of what kinds of goals language can accomplish (the functions of language), and of what are permissible utterances to accomplish each function (language strategies)" (1977, p. 79). Several researchers in the last decade have investigated functional language use in school settings. The focus of their research has been on specific aspects of why and how children use language in different social contexts (e.g., Cahir, 1978; Cazden, 1979; Simich, 1980; Jacob, 1981). One outcome of the research

on functional language use in the classroom has been the development of several sociolinguistically based language assessment instruments.

For example, Shuy, McCreedy and Adger (1979) developed an oral language assessment instrument for use with elementary school children who are speakers of vernacular Black English (VBE). The instrument consists of three components. The first provides for approximate measurement of phonological and morphosyntactic features. The second component evaluates communicative competence according to relative appropriateness and strategies children use for conversational functions such as explaining, describing, etc. The third component evaluates discourse abilities, such as appropriateness of interrupting, use of transitional markers, referencing and style shifting.

Another effort toward the development of sociolinguistic/ethnographic measures is represented in the work of Simich and Rivera (1981) in cooperation with Sunnyside and Tucson Unified School Districts (TUSD), in Arizona. An instrument, entitled the Teacher Observation System (TOS), was developed during a comprehensive two-year teacher training program. The goal of the program was to provide bilingual educators with background in linguistics, sociolinguistics, ethnographic methodologies, measurement, and research methodologies in order to enable them to develop accurate and effective language proficiency assessment strategies. The TOS was developed

based on the understanding that the range of students' language repertoire can only be determined through systematic and focused observations of interactions in a variety of school settings. A framework to identify the variables that influence students' communicative interactions was developed, based on certain components of speech events (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972). This framework is described in Table I.

TABLE I

Components of Instructional Events to be Considered in the Development of the Teacher Observation System

Setting	Participants	Channels of Communication	Languages(s) Used	Discourse Characteristics
Instructional (formal) vs. Non-instructional (informal) events	Teacher/Student(s) Student/Student(s)	speaking listening reading writing	English Spanish	coherence complexity adequacy of vocabulary code-switching

The following questions helped participants focus on an ethnographic/sociolinguistic perspective during the development of the TOS.

- What kind of communicative skills do bilingual students need to master in order to participate appropriately as members of the sociocultural school environment?
- In which sociocultural situations can these communicative skills be observed?
- What kinds of communicative skills do students bring to school?
- In which language(s), and sociocultural situations do students have the widest contextual range of communicative abilities?

The questions prompted a discussion of factors that influence students' communicative interactions. The components considered were: classroom organization (teacher-centered vs. student-centered), language of instruction, directness or indirectness of "teacher-talk"; students' language use and their sociocultural background; parents' socioeconomic and educational background, number of siblings, and language use at home, school and community.

Through the process of developing the TOS, teachers became aware of the sociocultural aspects of language as they acquired more sensitivity and understanding of language use in multicultural/multilingual school settings. This knowledge, they confirmed, assisted them in the classroom situation to make better judgements about their students' communicative proficiency.

Slaughter and Bennett (1981) are attempting to develop a unified framework for the analysis of discourse samples elicited from Spanish/English bilingual students. The framework will be used in the validation of the Language Proficiency Measure (LPM). The instrument developed by the TUSD purports to measure the language proficiency of K-12 English/Spanish bilingual students based on samples of discourse elicited in an experimental setting.

Another important development in language proficiency assessment is the incorporation of ecological validity as a consideration in the development and validation of language proficiency instruments.

Bronfenbrenner defines ecologically valid experiments as those which are

> ...conducted in settings that occur in the culture or subculture for other than research purposes, or might occur if social policies or practices were altered. Accordingly, in contrast to conventional experiments, in which setting, participants and activities are often unfamiliar and the experiment is a one-time event of short duration, ecological experiments involve places, social roles and activities that are enduring and known to the participants because they occur in everyday life...
>
> (1976, pp. 1-2)

Cazden, et al (1979) describe several instruments which conform to this ecological orientation in the 1977 article, Language Assessment: Where, What and How.

In summary, current language proficiency instruments reflect changes in theoretical perspectives in psychology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics. During the 1950's and early 1960's structuralism and psychometrics influenced the development of language tests which were intended to be objective and reliable. Later, developments in pragmatics and psycholinguistics led to wide use of cloze and dictation tests, reflecting the belief that language should be measured via holistic means. A new direction of language proficiency testing is emerging as a result of sociolinguistic/ethnographic research. This latest trend promotes the measurement of language as it is used and negotiated by participants in natural settings.

What is the State of the Art in Language Proficiency Assessment?

Political recognition of bilingual education came as a result of the January 1968 passage of the Bilingual Education Act. Its passage provided for the creation and federal support of bilingual education programs for limited and non-English-Speaking students. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and the revised Act of 1974 define bilingual education as a program of instruction that "is designed to teach... children in English and to teach in (the native) language so that they can progress effectively through school" (Bilingual Education: An Unmet Need, p. i).

Language was found to be particularly significant in the education of language minority students in the 1974 Lau vs. Nichols decision. In complying with the opinion of the court, the San Francisco Unified School District, along with a citizens' task force, developed the Lau Remedies (Task Force, 1975) as guidelines for school districts to follow in the placement of students whose "home language is other than English". Congress codified the decision as part of the Equal Education Opportunity Act of 1974 (Teitlebaum & Hiller, 1977). The Remedies specify that the students be identified through a home language survey and be categorized as:

A. Monolingual speakers of the language other than English

B. Predominantly speaks the language other than English

C. Bilingual

D. Predominantly speaks English

E. Monolingual speaker of English

(Task Force, 1975, p.2)

Students are to be placed in appropriate educational programs according to how they are categorized.

The 1978 Education Amendments indicate that students who are eligible for bilingual education are no longer defined as being LESA or of "limited English speaking ability" but, rather, as being LEP or of "limited English proficiency" (p. 69). The revised regulations specifically state that both oracy and literacy skills must be considered, thus refocusing the previous emphasis on oral proficiency. In other words, language proficiency, according to the amendments, includes all language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing.

In the recently revised Lau regulations (Nondiscrimination, 1980), there was an attempt to recognize this orientation. Thus, it was recommended that potentially eligible students be assessed in reading comprehension as well as in oral proficiency. Based on this assessment students were to be categorized as:

- primary language-superior;
- comparably limited in both languages; or
- English superior;

(Nondiscrimination, 1980, p. 52059)

Although the revised regulations are presently defunct, and the original Lau Remedies continue to be law, the revised regulations actually reflect a broader understanding of what is meant by language proficiency assessment. The inclusion of literacy as a criteria for placement implies a recognition of the interrelationship of oracy and literacy skills.

We ask ourselves, then, what is the state of the art in the development of language proficiency assessment instruments? The legal mandate to comply with local and federal regulations has all too often moved school districts to adopt language assessment procedures which are not necessarily valid or appropriate. Thus, a school district's purpose for utilizing certain procedure(s) and/or selecting language proficiency instrument(s) may not be motivated by educational concerns but by legal considerations. In some cases, in an attempt to comply, school districts dissatisfied with available procedures and instruments have attempted to develop procedures which meet the local needs (Ortiz, 1981).

From an educational perspective, the assessment of language proficiency is limited by the availability of valid and appropriate instruments designed for this purpose. Clark (1980) indicates that:

> As a largely inexact science (at least at the present state of development of the discipline), foreign - and second language proficiency testing does not enjoy the detailed logical and theoretical frameworks within which research and development activities take place in the 'hard' sciences.
>
> (p. 16)

A review of documents which attempt to systematically catalogue instruments indicates that criterion used to evaluate language assessment measures vary greatly (Center for Study in Evaluation, CSE, Hoepfner, et al, 1974; Northwest Regional Laboratory, NWRL, Silverman, Noa & Russel, 1977; Bay Area Bilingual Education League, BABEL, Bye, 1978; the Texas Report of the Committee for the Evaluation of Language Assessment Instruments, 1979, Boston University Bilingual Resource Training Center, BUBRTC, Rivera & Freytes, 1979, among others). For example, BABEL (Bye, 1978) describes cost, grade level, language of the test, what is measured, how the scores are interpretable, and whether the test has been field tested. The CSE (Hoepfner, 1974) and NWRL (Silverman, Noa & Russel, 1977) reports consider measurement validity, examinee appropriateness, technical excellence, and administrative usability. In general, when technical psychometric criteria are considered, the majority of language assessment tests fall short.

In addition to psychometric considerations, there is inconsistency in the manner in which different instruments rate the same student's skills. A study undertaken for the California State Department of Education (Ulibarri, Spencer & Rivas, 1980) found that a comparison of three oral language measures administered to the same students did not place them in parallel classifications; that is, students' language abilities varied significantly across tests. The measures reviewed were the LAS (Language Assessment Scales, De Avila & Duncan, 1976, 1977). the BSM (Bilingual Syntax Measure, Burt, Dulay &

Hernandez-Chavez, 1975), and the BINL (Basic Inventory of Natural Language, Herbert, 1977).

Gillmore and Dickerson's (1979) analysis for the Texas Education Agency of the BINL (Herbert, 1977), the BSM (Burt, Dulay & Hernandez-Chavez, 1975), the LAS (De Avila & Duncan, 1976, 1977), the PAL Oral Language Proficiency Measure (1978), and the SPLIT (Shutt Primary Language Indicator Test (Shutt, 1976) indicates that while all the tests purport to be measuring the same construct, the theoretical base for each is different. In general it was found that:

> there is only a slight to moderate relationship in the way any two of these tests are measuring language ability... The scores of students with three assessments were summarized according to agreement of LESA (Limited English Speaking Ability) classifications. Of the students with three language assessment scores... 32% had three agreeing LESA classifications and...68% had disagreeing LESA classifications"
>
> (pp.1 and 12)

Rodriguez-Brown and Elias-Olivares (1981) examined the language constructs measured by three popular language proficiency instruments - the James Language Dominance Test (James, 1974), the BSM (Burt, Dulay & Hernandez-Chavez, 1975), and the LAS (De Avila & Duncan, 1976, 1977). A comparison of test items with language used by children in natural settings revealed a discrepancy between the language skills being tested and children's actual linguistic repertoires.

Despite great dissatisfaction with available language proficiency tests, the consensus has been that available instruments must be used.

The Texas Report of the Committee for the Evaluation of Language Assessment Instruments (1979) justifies the practice because:

> no better measuring devices exist...the state of the art of our understanding is partial or incomplete...(it is necessary) to make a decision on the basis which is not completely subjective and...(there is an urgent) need to allocate services and resources.
>
> (pp.4-5)

In summary, the motivation for developing language proficiency instruments and assessment procedures is prompted by the need to identify and place LEP students in appropriate educational programs. The issue is compounded by the pressure placed on school districts to comply with local and federal regulations. The state of the art in language testing is such that available instruments, in general, do not possess psychometric reliability and validity, yet educators continue to use available instruments because "no better measuring devices exist" (Texas, p. 5).

What Implications Do Current Research Findings Have for Language Proficiency Assessment?

Development of language proficiency assessment instruments has been greatly influenced by the various interpretations of linguistic theories and their application. Assessment measures developed in the 1950's and 1960's were greatly influenced by structural linguistic views of language and psychometric methodology which promoted the testing of discrete aspects of language. These instruments were

generally intended for adults learning a foreign language and as such assumed literacy in the native language.

During the 1970's the influence of psycholinguistics was reflected in the attempt to incorporate generative linguistic theory into language proficiency testing. The concept that "the reliable variance in a great variety of educational and psychological tests can be attributed to a single global factor of language proficiency" (Oller, 1979, p. 61) motivated the development of tests which "must invoke the expectancy system or grammar of the examinee" (p. 16). Oller posits that tests which reflect the pragmatic perspective, such as dictation, cloze and their variations "probably provide more accurate information concerning language proficiency...than the more familiar tests produced on the basis of discrete point theory" (1979, p. 9).

The sociolinguistic/ethnographic perspective entailing "the notion that children's school language should be viewed within a broader framework of culturally acquired communicative competence" (Philips, 1980, pp. 2-3) has recently begun to influence language proficiency assessment practices. Methodologically, this approach implies the focused observation of students' language use in naturalistic settings. In contrast to the traditional approaches to testing, it does not generally rely on paper and pencil type of tests which can be statistically analyzed.

While traditional psychometric approaches to testing are generally used for purposes of identification and placement, they are recognized

to be inadequate. Thus, the controversy remains as to the nature of language and how to best measure it. Issues which have not been adequately addressed by traditional testing procedures include such basic questions as:

- What does it mean to be proficient?

  Does it mean a person's receptive/expressive knowledge of discrete grammatical components of a language?

  Does it mean a person's knowledge of linguistic code(s) and its (their) appropriate use in different social contexts? (Note 1)

- What are the variables which influence language use during communicative interactions?

- How should these variables be incorporated into the development of language proficiency measures?

Current research which has implications for language proficiency assessment practices includes research in adult language proficiency testing, cognitive studies which attempt to conceptualize the construct of language proficiency, development of theoretical models of communicative competence, studies investigating the validity of measures of communicative competence, and ethnographic/sociolinguistic studies of children's functional use of language. Representative research in each area will be reviewed.

Research efforts in adult language proficiency testing are represented by the work of the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and the Educational Testing Service (ETS). These efforts are discussed because of their potential application to the assessment of language minority students.

The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) has played a significant role in the development of an oral interview testing system to assess foreign language proficiency. The system has evolved over the past thirty years. The significance of this effort lies in the standardization of: oral testing procedures, the aspects of performance that are to be observed, and their rating. While the FSI Oral Interview Test represents a positive effort in the measurement of oral language proficiency of adult foreign language learners, the system is limited in its ability to measure the effectiveness of the communication process within cultural contexts (Rice, 1959). Currently efforts are being made to emphasize "more realistic uses of language" (Jones, Note 2), with a greater stress being placed on comprehension ability of individuals being tested. The goal of the FSI Oral Interview Test is to predict government employees' successful use of the target language in overseas assignments. Although designed to assess adults' foreign language proficiency, it has the potential to be adapted to assess the language proficiency of school age LEP students.

Clark (1980) proposes the development of a "common measure" of speaking proficiency in second and foreign languages for use with high-school and adult learners. He defines "common measure" as "...a uniform testing procedure that can be used with diverse groups of examinees in a variety of language learning situations with testing results reported on a single uniform scale" (p. 15). He argues that there is a need for development of a measure of speaking proficiency

that can be validly used in a series of different situations for which development of specific procedures is not realistic. In an update on the development of such a measure, Clark (1981) emphasizes its benefits and potential use:

- to further the development of a more sophisticated measurement procedure;
- to make available a cost and time effective instrument which evaluates communicative proficiency in different situations and for different second language learners;
- to provide a highly valid and reliable instrument for use in the validation of other tests of speaking proficiency.

Cummins suggests that the present state of the art in language proficiency assessment is confused because of the "failure to develop an adequate theoretical framework for relating language proficiency to academic achievement" (1979). He contends that:

> there has been a failure to adequately conceptualize the construct of language proficiency and its cross-lingual dimensions. In other words, there has been relatively little inquiry into what forms of language proficiency are related to the development of literacy skills in school contexts, and how the development of literate proficiency in L_1 relates to the development of literate proficiency in L_2.
>
> (1980, p. 27)

He posits that there are two dimensions to language proficiency: cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) and basic interpersonal communication skill (BICS). CALP refers "to the dimension of language proficiency that is strongly related to literacy skills. BICS refers to cognitively undemanding manifestations of language in

interpersonal situations" (Cummins, 1980, p. 28). He hypothesizes that these two dimensions of language can be empirically distinguished and that the native (L_1) and second language (L_2) CALP-like skills are manifestations of the same underlying dimension. Based on these hypotheses, which are currently being investigated (Cummins, et al, Note 3), Cummins suggests that "placement of bilingual children in different types of instructional programs should not be based only on 'natural communication' (BICS) tasks (but that) developmental levels of L_1 and L_2 CALP should also be taken into account" (1980, p. 54). Thus, he strongly recommends that students' literacy skills be tested in both L_1 and L_2 before placement/exit decisions are made.

Sociolinguistic theory and research in teaching second language learners has brought the concept of communicative competence (Hymes, 1974) into prominence. While many interpretations have been given to this concept, in general it is used to refer to mastery of communicative skills acquired by second language learners and the appropriate use of these skills during social interactions. Two models based on this concept are presented here because they provide a frame of reference for ongoing developments in language proficiency assessment.

Canale and Swain (1979) suggest a model which is based on the identification of features considered important for communicating. These communication features are characterized as being interaction-based, unpredictable, creative and purposive. Communication is authentic rather than contrived and takes place within sociolinguistic and discourse

contexts. Successful communication is judged on the basis of actual outcomes. The three components of the communicative competence model are: linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies. Linguistic competence deals with mastery of the grammar of a language. Sociolinguistic competence involves mastery of appropriate language use, with an emphasis on meaning and the appropriateness of the linguistic forms used to convey meaning. Strategic competence refers to second language learners' ability to compensate, repair and use other strategies in their attempts to communicate with other participants.

Research by Slaughter and Bennett (1981) into the nature of discourse of bilingual children expands on Swain and Canale's discourse component. Bennett (1981) describes discourse as being temporal, reflexive, multi-vocal and multi-modal. It is temporal in that it evolves through time. It is reflexive in that language creates the context for it to be understood. It is multi-vocal in that different meanings and interpretations are always available to participants; and it is multi-modal in that it involves the selection of varied modalities such as choices of grammar, lexicon and non-verbal behaviors.

Briere (1979) developed a model which recognizes sociolinguistic and linguistic competence as components of communicative proficiency. These competencies have two dimensions: one at the abstract level, or linguistic/sociolinguistic competence, and the other at the performance level, or linguistic/sociolinguistic performance. At the performance level communicative proficiency is associated with the speaker's use of the grammar of the language in appropriate social interactions.

The relevance of both Canale and Swain's and Briere's attempts to develop models of communicative proficiency is that they provide researchers and practitioners with a comprehensive framework. The models suggest that language proficiency tests should consider knowledge of the linguistic code concurrently with appropriateness of its use during social interactions.

Bachman and Palmer (1979;1981) investigated the contruct validation of language tests, in a two-phase study. They explored the validity of a simple model of language which consisted of two traits--speaking and reading. They found that the model statistically explained test results better than a single factor model (Oller, 1979). Encouraged by the findings, they expanded their research to investigate the construct validity of several other models of language. Using confirmatory factor analysis they found that the model which showed the highest degree of statistical significance is a model that posits one single factor and three specific trait factors: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic. The model was developed based on Canale and Swain's (1979) model of communicative competence.

Ethnographic and sociolinguistic studies of children in a New York Puerto Rican community (Poplack, 1981) add to our understanding of the evolution and maintenance of language in stable bilingual speech communities. The role of code-switching of bilingual adults and children investigated from an intergenerational perspective gives

insights into the acquisition and use of code-switching and its relationship to language proficiency.

Rodriguez-Brown and Elias-Olivares (1981), in investigating the communicative competence of bilingual children, concentrated on the expressive strategies used to make inquiries. Their findings indicate the importance of focusing on bilingual children's language use in experimental test situations.

Simich and Rivera's work in cooperation with teachers and specialists from Tucson Unified School District, Tucson Arizona, represents a preliminary effort to identify functional uses of language in elementary bilingual and monolingual classrooms. This work attempts to clarify the reasons why children and other participants communicate and how children's knowledge of acceptable functional uses of language relate to language proficiency.

In summary, theoretical and applied research from the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspective is providing basic information that is proving useful in the further exploration of language proficiency assessment practices. The research cited is intended to be representative of both traditional and non-traditional approaches to interpretations of the nature of language, language proficiency and language proficiency assessment.

Conclusion

The intent of this article has been to discuss issues of language proficiency assessment within the framework of three questions:

- What are the basic premises upon which current language assessment instruments have been developed?
- What is the state of the art in language proficiency assessment?
- What implications do current research findings have for language proficiency assessment?

In response to the first question, an overview was presented of the basic premises upon which currently used language assessment instruments have been developed. Research efforts in the development of traditional/psychometric and non-traditional sociolinguistic/ethnographic language proficiency assessment measures were described.

The state of the art question was approached from a legal and technical perspective. The legal mandate to comply with federal and state regulations prompts school district personnel to use available language proficiency instruments even if they "fail to measure what they are intended to" (Deitrich, Freeman, & Crandall, 1979). From a technical perspective language proficiency tests, in general, do not meet validity and reliability standards. The most commonly used instruments are inconsistent in the way they rate the language proficiency of the same student and the language constructs being measured are not necessarily compatible.

In an attempt to answer the third question, representative research which has implications for the assessment of language proficiency was reviewed. Efforts in the development of adult second language tests are important because they are attempting to provide a model for evaluating the language proficiency of adult second language learners in a variety of situations. These efforts have potential applications for use with language minority students.

Cummins recognizes two dimensions of language: CALP and BICS. He hypothesizes that these two dimensions of language can be empirically distinguished and that CALP-like skills in L_1 and L_2 are manifestations of the same underlying dimensions. Based on these hypotheses he recommends that language assessment of LEP students include not only oracy but literacy skills in both L_1 and L_2.

The ethnographic/sociolinguistic studies cited begin to provide a better understanding of the language construct and how this relates to language use and language assessment. From this perspective, it is posited that language should be assessed as it is used in natural rather than experimental settings. Basic to the sociolinguistic/ethnographic approach is the belief that teachers should develop observational skills together with a better understanding of functional language use of participants in school settings. The major contribution of this approach is the incorporation of a sociolinguistic/anthropological perspective to the interpretation of the nature of language, language use and its measurement.

A drawback to the ethnographic/sociolinguistic approach is that it discourages consideration of traditionally measured language skills which are part of the language of instruction and learning in the school setting. In its recognition that language proficiency assessment should include both linguistic and sociolinguistic competencies, Canale and Swain's model of communication competence provides perspective to the issue. It draws attention to the fact that there is a need to focus not only on linguistic components of language, but on sociolinguistic competencies.

Based on our experience, our knowledge of the state of the art, and current research efforts, we close with recommendations for assessment strategies, research, and teacher training.

Assessment Strategies:

- An eclectic approach to assessment of oracy and literacy skills is recommended. That is, assessment of LEP students should include assessment of all four language skill areas--listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Determination of language proficiency of LEP students should be based on multiple assessments of oracy and literacy skills in L_1 and L_2.
- A critical factor to be considered when assessing the language proficiency of language minority students is whether or not they possess literacy skills in their native language.
- Appropriate use of language in a wide range of social contexts should be considered an essential part of language proficiency assessment. This perspective implies informal observation of the students to determine the appropriateness of discourse used and his/her knowledge of the social rules of interaction established by participants in different social contexts.

- Assessment instruments should be selected according to their appropriateness for measuring oracy and literacy skills as they relate to the curriculum objectives of the school program.

Research:

- Efforts to improve statistical reliability and validity as well as ecological validity of current instruments in use should be encouraged.
- Research efforts should be directed toward the development of language proficiency measures appropriate for use with LEP students with special needs.
- There is a need for further research to better explain how the functional uses of language in different domains, i.e., community, home and school relate to language proficiency.
- Research into the acquisition and development of discourse strategies children use for communication should continue.

Teacher Training:

- Teachers should be trained in the basics of traditional language proficiency test development and its interpretation.
- Systematic and continuous teacher training in sociolinguistic/anthropological approaches to language, together with training in observational strategies should be encouraged.

Reference Notes

1. Social context refers to cultural/physical contexts in which communicative events take place. The social context is an important variable which influences communicative outcomes. In school settings both academic and non-academic events are common. Examples of social contexts range from math class to recess.

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Summary of Presentations

at

The Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) Symposium

The Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) Symposium, held March 14-18, 1981, at Airlie House in Warrenton, Virginia, was planned and implemented as part of the Assessment of Language Proficiency of Bilingual Persons (ALPBP) project. The goals of the ALPBP project, funded by the National Institute of Education (NIE) and administered by InterAmerica Research Associates, Inc., are to support research which further develops the constructs of language and communicative competence and its assessment and to develop programs to train teachers in alternative modes of assessing the language proficiency of language minority students.

The LPA Symposium represented a major effort toward integrating both the insights gained from findings emerging from the research component and the implementation of the teacher training programs of the ALPBP project. The Symposium provided a forum where a broad spectrum of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers met to discuss the major issues and research findings which affect language proficiency assessment practices. The Symposium also provided a structure for participants to make practical recommendations directed at influencing federal and state policies regarding language proficiency assessment research and practices. Another objective of the Symposium was to encourage the participants to develop a network of communication for the purposes of exchanging information and incorporating this knowledge into their areas of responsibility.

Researchers were represented by scholars involved in the development of models of communicative competence, related empirical research, and the development and validation of tests of language proficiency and/or communicative competence. Practitioners included teachers and school administrators engaged in the implementation of programs which require the application of language proficiency assessment strategies. Policymakers were individuals who play an important role in the funding of educational research projects related to language proficiency assessment and who are influential in the establishment of policy in this area.

The participants interacted through the presentation of papers, reactions to presentations, and informal discussions. The main goals of the Symposium were selected by the organizers based on a survey of concerns of researchers and educators. The goals were:

- to develop a working definition of communicative competence/ language proficiency;
- to make recommendations for the assessment of language minority students for the purpose of entry/exit into appropriate educational programs; and
- to develop an agenda for future research based on present and past research.

The issues in the area of language proficiency assessment ranged from theoretical questions regarding the nature of communicative competence to the application of research findings. Central to the discussion of language proficiency assessment was the acknowledged need to clarify the nature and scope of communicative competence and its relationship to language proficiency. Topics of discussion in this regard included research findings concerning the nature of children's language use and the role of first and second languages in the learning of literacy-related skills.

Language tests and testing methods were also topics addressed by the participants. Questions were raised as to what these tests should be measuring and why. Many of the participants were concerned with the issue of the reliability of currently-used language proficiency assessment instruments as well as with the development of new, more appropriate measures. A multi-disciplinary approach to language proficiency assessment and the development of more innovative methods of language testing was supported by participants. An approach of this type utilizes information from such areas as psychology, anthropology and linguistics, thus providing the opportunity to gain insights from different perspectives into patterns of language use and related topics. A sociolinguistic/ethnographic perspective to language proficiency assessment, for example, was one of the unique approaches which was examined at the Symposium.

The impact that new research findings have on the establishment of government policy and, in particular, of federal guidelines in the area of language proficiency assessment, was a type which most of the participants believed required serious consideration. Since language proficiency assessment practices are currently undergoing a period of change and reevaluation, it was suggested that the federal government, in revising the LAU guidelines, provide a means of incorporating new research findings regarding the nature of language which have implications for assessing minority students.

Following are brief descriptions of the presentations at the LPA Symposium. The summaries are organized and described based on the following categories:

- papers dealing with the nature and scope of communicative competence and its measurement;
- papers reporting applied research;
- papers which incorporate ethnographic/sociolinguistic methodologies and theories;
- papers dealing with policy and educational issues relating to entry/exit procedures;
- papers summarizing the symposium themes; and
- summary of participants understandings and recommendations.

Nature and Scope of Communicative Competence and Its Measurement

In "Wanted: A Theoretical Framework for Relating Language Proficiency to Academic Achievement Among Bilingual Students," Cummins argues that "a major reason for the confused state of the art of language proficiency in bilingual programs...stems from the failure to develop an adequate theoretical framework for relating language proficiency to academic achievement." He contends that without such a "framework it is impossible either to develop rational entry/exit criteria for bilingual programs or to design testing procedures to assess these criteria." He provides an overview of the evolution of a proposed framework, which was based on "the fact that the development of age-appropriate proficiency in two languages appear to be associated with cognitive advantages, whereas the attainment of only relatively low levels of bilingual proficiency is associated with cognitive disadvantages..." It was thus hypothesized that:

> The first, lower threshold level, must be attained by bilingual children in order to avoid cognitive disadvantages and the second, higher threshold, (is) necessary to allow the potentially beneficial aspects of bilingualism to influence cognitive growth.

Because the threshold hypothesis did not explicitly relate first and second language proficiencies, Cummins supplemented it with the interdependence hypothesis which suggests "that L_1 and L_2 academic proficiencies (are) developmentally independent, i.e., in educational contexts the development of second language proficiency (is) partially dependent upon the prior level of development of L_1 proficiency."

Cummins makes the distinction "between L_2 'surface-fluency' and more cognitively--and academically--related aspects of language proficiency."

He refers to the distinction as "basic interpersonal communicative skills" (BICS) and "cognitive-academic language proficiency" (CALP). Within the BICS-CALP framework, he reformulates the interdependence hypothesis in terms of the "common underlying proficiency" (CUP) model. In this model an individual's proficiency is held to be "theoretically capable of being developed in either language." He contends that educators have failed to account for the distinction and, for this reason, have actively contributed to academic failure of language minority students. He asserts that, "the CALP-BICS distinction was not a distinction between 'communicative' and 'cognitive' aspects of language proficiency." Because of "concerns expressed about possible misinterpretation of their meaning and implications," he states that although he avoids using the terms BICS and CALP, "the basic distinctions highlighted by these terms are unchanged."

In a "cursory examination" of currently available language proficiency measures, Cummins found great variations in what language tests purport to measure. Despite this finding, he indicates that it is not startling "In view of the lack of consensus as to the nature of language proficiency or communicative competence." He contends that the most important issue to be addressed in the development of entry/exit criteria in bilingual education programs is to determine the extent to which measures of language proficiency should be related to measures of academic achievement. The assertion is made that "without a theoretical framework within which language proficiency can be related to the development of academic skills there is no basis for choosing between alternative tests which are clearly measuring very different things under the guise of 'language proficiency'."

Cummins concludes by highlighting requirements for a "theoretical framework of language proficiency relevant to bilingual education in the United States...":

> First, such a framework must incorporate a developmental perspective such that those aspects of language proficiency which are mastered early by native speakers and L_2 learners can be distinguished from those that continue to vary across individuals as development progresses; second, the framework must be capable of allowing differences between the linguistic demands of the school and those of interpersonal contexts outside the school to be described; third, the framework must be capable of allowing the developmental relationships between L_1 and L_2 proficiency to be described.

Rudolph Troike, in "SCALP-Social and Cultural Aspects of Language Proficiency," examines the validity of Cummins' CALP and "interdependence hypothesis." He considers the significance of social, contextual and cultural factors in academic achievement and the assessment of language proficiency. Troike states that, contrary to the ideas expressed by Cummins', CALP may be merely an indicator of a student's "acculturation" rather than of cognitive ability. Troike theorizes that social and cultural factors rather than linguistic factors, account for most of the disparities in academic achievement among language minority students. He indicates that while there is little understanding of the "ways home background, including SES," influence the learner, there is even less of an understanding of how "sociolinguistic/cultural attitudes, expectations, and behaviors manifested by the teacher and others" interact to stimulate or retard the individual learners' progress. Because these factors are largely unaccounted for in Cummins hypotheses, and may only "reveal acculturative approximations to middle-class western cultural norms and behaviors," Troike strongly suggests that much more research into social, cultural, individual and linguistic factors will

be needed before conclusions can be reached concerning the relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement of language minority students.

Cynthia Wallat and Gladys Knott present a framework for a discussion of cummunicative competence by providing a review of theory perspectives on learning and performance along with an overview of program implications in "Communicative Competence: Analysis of Models, Characteristics and Program Implications." Wallat and Knott summarize "approaches to competence from child development, social psychology, ethnology, and education research traditions" in order to provide a "historical perspective on the notion of competencies." They furnish this overview in order to create a framework for the discussion of "current perspectives" on communicative competence.

Ellen Rosansky reviews data from studies concerned with the validity of several currently used oral assessment instruments in "Future Perspectives on Research in Oral Language Proficiency Assessment." She also discusses the recently withdrawn LAU regulations and current research efforts in oral language proficiency assessment. The data presented regarding the lack of validity of currently used oral assessment instruments supports Rosansky's statement that the present state of testing in this area is not very encouraging. "Indeed it seems unlikely that we can validly and accurately assess the English language proficiency of limited or non-English children at present." She qualifies her pessimism in this regard by indicating that there is a promise of hope in research which is currently in progress.

Applied Research

Various attempts to apply these and other theories to different aspects of language proficiency assessment comprised a major portion of the papers presented at the Symposium. The topics addressed ranged from the development of new test constructs, to research on the acquisition of literacy related skills, to some of the more innovative approaches being used for language assessment.

Michael Canale describes an ongoing project to develop two communicative proficiency instruments for use in French language schools in Ontario, Canada. One instrument is to be used for testing French as a first language and another for testing English as a second language. In the paper, "A Communicative Approach to Language Assessment in a Minority Setting," Canale outlines the theoretical framework upon which the proposed tests of communicative competence will be based. Communication in the framework includes four areas of language skills: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. "It is assumed that this theory of communicative competence interacts with other systems of knowledge and skills (e.g., world knowledge, general perception strategies), as well as with a theory of human action (dealing with such factors as volition and personality)." Canale points out that although the theoretical framework has some inadequacies it has "proven useful in suggesting specifications for context, formats and scoring criteria in communication-oriented language proficiency assessment." He indicates that the project, in addition to having immediate direct application, will provide the opportunity to explore important issues in language proficiency assessment, such as how accurate the proposed theoretical framework may be and

what relevance "communicative proficiency" may have to "academic achievement in a langage minority setting."

Lyle Bachman and Adrian Palmer discuss their attempts to develop a model of communicative competence and valid tests of its components in "Some Comments of the Terminology of Language Testing." They discuss three approaches to language proficiency testing: The Skill-Component Approach, the Communicative Approach and the Measurement Approach. They then "propose an interpretation of the Canale/Swain communicative approach within the general framework of measurement theory." In the course of integrating the models, they delineate a set of hypotheses which they developed regarding language ability.

Because the use of test terminology has become imprecise they, then, attempt to "provide some more precise definitions of terms used to describe language proficiency." Among the terms they define are: linguistic competence, communicative competence, language skills, linguistic performance, communicative performance, measures of linguistic performance, and measures of communicative performance.

In "Improving the Psychometric and Criterion Reference Qualities of Integrative Language Tests," Gary Cziko described research efforts to determine whether modifications of existing integrative testing procedures could be made to improve (their) psychometric, criterion-referenced, and practical qualities. Specifically, Cziko investigated the effects of changing the standard procedures of constructing, administering, and scoring English as a Second Language (ESL) dictation tests. He describes a study for which he constructed a dictation test that would:

- "be appropriate for a wide range of ability in ESL, i.e., from near zero...to native speaker level competence;
- be significantly easier and faster to score than the common scoring procedure...;
- be a good predictor of the individual's response to each item; and
- yield scores that would be directly interpreted with respect to specified criterion levels of English proficiency."

Analysis of 102 students' dictation test results indicated that:

- the difficulty of a dictation test can be manipulated by changing the length of segments;
- "exact spelling criterion" can yield a group of items which form an accurate Guttman scale of an individual's total score; and
- scoring a test by segments using an exact spelling criterion is much faster than scoring word by word.

Cziko concludes by suggesting that tests be made more meaningful and more consistent with evolving insight into what language proficiency is. Moreover, he points out that "test scores themselves (should be made) more meaningful."

Richard Duran discusses the significance of communicative competence research in terms of the development and use of integrative proficiency tests in "Some Implications of Communicative Competence Research for Integrative Proficiency Testing." Integrative proficiency tests, according to Duran, are based on the "notion that linguistic skills need to be studied as they interact with each other in naturally occuring segments of language use, (even though) the contexts for assessment may vary from formal testing contexts to elicitations of speech or writing in situations in everyday settings."

He states that "the interpretation and theoretical design of proficiency tests" may be improved "by attending to some of the discourse and interactional skills uncovered in communicative competence research." Integrative proficiency testing can benefit, he believes, from communicative competence in two ways:

- recognition or investigation of how a student's language skills will vary according to his or her background, the "examiner's characteristics, discourse topic and other parameters of speech event;" and
- "future development of new assessment procedures sensitive to social influence on discourse behavior and communicative competence."

There were a number of papers presented which addressed the theme of the acquisition of literacy related skills in first and second language. Several individuals presented research, completed or in progress, which attempt to test theories in this area.

Jim Cummins, et al, reports on a study carried out for the purpose of evaluating the "linguistic interdependence" hypothesis. For the study, "Linguistic Interdependence Among Japanese Immigrant Students," Cummins, et al, tested ninety (90) high socioeconomic status Japanese students attending grades 2 & 3 and 5 & 6 of the School of Supplementary Japanese Studies in Toronto, Canada. Using group English and Japanese academic language proficiency measures, individual English academic measures and Japanese and English interviews, the researchers found that older immigrant students whose first language proficiency is "better established at the time of intensive exposure to the second language, not only make more rapid

progress in acquiring most aspects of the second language but also maintain and develop their first language more adequately than students who immigrate at younger ages."

In his presentation, "Graphic Sense and its Effects on the Acquisition of Literacy," Eduardo Hernandez-Chavez describes the relationship of graphic sense to reading socialization and reading readiness. The framework for the study, he explains, was based on the hypothesis that success in learning to read depends upon the level of graphic development in the child and that the rate of this development is related to the quality of the child's socialization experiences. He indicates that the research questions investigated were:

- What is the nature of children's pre-reading conceptualization of the printed word?
- How are children socialized to print, i.e., what attributes and practices with respect to reading are found in the home? How is this socialization related to the development of children's graphic sense and their readiness to read?

Participating in the study were approximately 14 children ranging from pre-school to first grade. In addition, he states, a sample of parents were surveyed to ascertain how socialization to print in the home relates to the acquisition of literacy.

The results of the study, he concludes, support the proposition that children pass through developmental stages in their understanding of written language and that the level of graphic sense is related to the nature of a child's exposure to and interaction with written language at

home. Education and literacy of parents, as well as social literacy activities in the home are also important factors which affect the development of graphic sense.

Besty Tregar describes in "Oral and Reading Abilities of Bilingual Program Students," her investigation to determine whether second language oral ability or first language reading ability is a more accurate predictor or condition for the development of seoond language reading skills. The sample for the study, she indicates, were four hundred non-English dominant children. Of the total sample, two hundred were Chinese speaking students in grades 3-8 and two hundred twenty Spanish speaking students in grades 3-8. Oral dominance, as well as cloze reading tests, developed by the Boston Public Schools, were used for the data collection.

Tregar states that for elementary students in grades 3-5, it was found that there was a higher correlation between L_1 and L_2 reading comprehension than between L_2 oral ability and L_2 reading comprehension. For the middle school students a higher correlation was found between L_2 oral ability and L_2 reading comprehension.

In "Language Proficiency in Bilingual Native American Schools: Problems, Strategies and Prospects" Steven Chesarek discusses testing issues as they relate to native American groups. He identifies limitations of using testing instruments in cross-cultural settings. His experience base is the Crow reservation in southeastern Montana. He considers testing a decision making tool which must be carefully monitored. He argues that a "test by itself is useless if it is not utilized in an appropriate design." Chesarek provides examples of some "research strategies to minimize test

limitations." Among the strategies he recommends are: the development of a base which provides a better understanding for interpretation of test results in cross-cultural settings, and the need for item analysis when testing across cultures because total scores may be misleading.

In concluding, Chesarek makes the point that "the...entire testing activity (is lost) if we are not able to select appropriate instruments and use the information they provide to make initial decisions about suitable programs and to refine those programs based on additional information provided by later testing."

Zoe Ann Hayes provides a report on a study of English and Spanish proficiencies of Hispanic third grade students in "'Limited' Language Proficiency of Mexican American Third Grade Students: A Problem in the Definition and Measurement of Bilingualism." The purposes of the study were to explore whether:

- verbal skills of limited bilingual proficient students are distributed across languages and whether this distribution is a function of domain;
- students are classified as limited bilingual proficient on communicative as well as linguistic competence measures; and
- the method of scoring relates to the designation of limited bilingual proficient.

The researcher makes use of written tests, tests of communicative competence in both English and Spanish as well as a measure of developmental level to determine the level of cognitive development and how it relates to limited and fluent language proficiency.

The results of this investigation, Hayes suggests, "do not lend support for the conclusion that limited bilingual language proficiency is a widespread phenomenon." Rather, the conclusions indicate that the "use of language tests which measure only one aspect of language (i.e., grammar or vocabulary) and which provide cutoff (levels are) of questionable validity."

Complicating the issue of various tests measuring different skills, she states, is the lack of comparability in the level designations provided by test developers. The cutoff points used to designate limited and proficient status in a language are not anchored on criteria which indicate whether students can or cannot function effectively in English-only instruction. As currently available, many language proficiency instruments fail to distinguish between those who may be truly limited or proficient in a language and those who are not. The researcher suggests the use of specific external criteria (i.e., grade level achievement) to validate cutoff scores and level designation. In addition, language proficiency tests which designate proficiency levels based on monolingual norms may not be valid indicators of language proficiency sufficient to succeed in English-only classrooms, without special language assistance.

It is suggested by the researcher that the concurrent and content validity of language tests and the predictive validity of cutoff scores, lead to the possible misclassification of non-English language background (NELB) students. Approximately thirty percent of the students in this study were inconsistently classified using any two instruments.

Error in classification also occurs if a bilingual's language skills are measured without consideration of distribution of skills across two languages. It was thought that perhaps students in San Jose, California had been raised in diglossic environments using Spanish for one set of functions and English for another. Results of this investigation indicate that these students do not appear to come from diglossic bilingual environments. Rather, students use English and Spanish in both home and school situations; although stronger in Spanish, their languages do not seem to be separate as a function of domain.

The lack of distribution of language skills across languages and domains might also be related to the students age and length of residency. Due to the restricted range of the third grade, there was little variation in length of residency.

Finally, the following conclusions related to the concept of "semilingualism" were drawn: By definition, "semilingualism" is limited proficiency in both L_1 and L_2. The results of this investigation indicate that "semilingualism" exists only as a concept. There is no reliable evidence for the existence of the phenomenon. Since there appears to be no way to reliably measure the phenomenon nor unambiguously identify it, it is not useful as a construct. Some literature on "semilingualism" suggests that limited bilingual language proficiency may have negative cognitive results. No indication of this relationship was found to exist for the study population. Although any one test or combination of tests indicated that a student may appear to be limited in both L_1 and L_2 (and this identification was likely to be unreliable and of questionable validity), no differences in cognitive

development were discovered between limited and proficient groups of bilingual students.

The needs of Asian-American students are examined by Rosita Galang in "Native Language Assessment of Asian-American Students." Galang's discussion centers around four topics:

- the need for the language assessment of Limited English Proficient/Non-English Proficient (LEP/NEP) students;
- native language assessment of Asian-American students;
- recent developments and controversies in language testing; and
- future directions for research and development.

"Evidence is provided which supports Galang's conclusion that the needs of Asian-American and other minority language groups in the United States are far from being adequately met, that "assessment in Asian languages is still in its embryonic stage."

Children with (special) learning disabilities and the appropriateness of bilingual education in meeting their needs are issues considered by Margaret Bruck in her presentation "The Suitability of Bilingual Education for Children with Special Needs." Bruck's discussion is based on results of two Canadian studies designed to determine whether the same array of symptoms would appear if education occured in the mother tongue."

The first study focused on:

- whether exposure to a second language interferes with the language disabled (LD) child's acquisition of first language skills;

- whether the language disabled children acquire oral proficiency in a second language; and
- whether language disabled children acquire competence in first and second language literacy skills.

Two groups of kindergarten language disabled children, one schooled in French immersion programs, and another schooled in English, were compared to children who were not language disabled. Children were assessed over a three year period.

The second study "was designed to examine the effects of French immersion programs on a more heterogeneous group of learning disabled children. (Although) oral proficiency skills were normal (the students) were delayed in the acquisition of reading and writing skills."

Bruck concludes that the findings from the studies indicate that:

> (it is feasible) to educate bilingual disabled children in "additive" bilingual environments. Given the appropriate...conditions such students can learn a second language without impeding normal development of first language and cognitive academic skills. However, bilingual education by itself is not a solution for their specific learning problems...Bilingual programs should not be viewed as a special education service, but rather an environment where children, regardless of their academic or cognitive potential, can acquire proficiency in two languages, and knowledge of two cultures while maintaining their respective ethnic identities.

A review of literature on communicative competences was provided by Arnulfo Ramirez along with the results of research on communicative proficiency by Politzer and Ramirez in "Issues in Measuring the Communicative Proficiency of Language Minority Pupils." In his review, Ramirez examines what he considers to be four major areas of communicative competence:

- linguistic and communicative competence in language testing theory;
- definitions of communicative competence;
- assessment of communicative competence; and
- factors which influence pupil performance on linguistic and communicative proficiency tests.

Ramirez presents research findings to:

- clarify the relationship between communicative and linguistic competence and the importance of one over the other in measuring linguistic ability;
- determine the relative concurrent and predictive validity of the two competencies in terms of pupil achievement; and
- determine how individual student characteristics influence performance on linguistic and communicative competence tests.

Students from four different schools in the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas were tested using the English and Spanish Bilingual Oral Language Tests, the English and Spanish Active Communicative Competence Tests, the English and Spanish Receptive Communicative Competence Tests, and the English and Spanish Sociolinguistic Competence Tests. Students were mixed Mexican-American and Anglo-American with some students having recently arrived from Latin America. They ranged from grade four (4) through senior high school.

Ramirez reports the following conclusions:

- home language (Spanish) has a negative relation to English language measures and a positive association with Spanish linguistic competence and Spanish communicative competence;

- self-concept relates positively to communicative competence in both languages and to linguistic communicative competence in English. Sociolinguistic competence is associated with a positive self-concept;

- field independent learning style is related to both English linguistic competence and communcative competence at the high school level; and

- field independent learning style is primarily associated with communicative measures at the elementary school level.

Ethnographic/Sociolinguistic Approaches to Language Proficiency Assessment

Various individuals at the Symposium presented research which involved what has been called an ethnographic approach or a study in which data related to children's language skills has been collected in more natural surroundings rather than in the classroom. This approach places much more emphasis on the use of observation of children in natural contexts as opposed to traditional testing/experimental methods.

One such approach was described in the papers of Susan Philips', "Bilingual Language Assessment: An Ethnographic Approach," and Charlene Rivera and Carmen Simich's "Ethnographic/Sociolinguistic Issues and the Assessment of Bilingual Students Language Proficiency." Philips, Rivera and Simich describe the implementation of a teacher training program implemented in Tucson, Arizona which utilized a non-traditional approach to language proficiency assessment. The approach which is sociolinguistic/ethnographic in nature is based on the premise that language encompasses "the child's full range of social uses of language and nonverbal signals and is not isolated to just mastery of those abilities necessary for the acquisition of literacy-related skills."

Philips provides a description of Phase I of the teacher training program where the focus was on "three aspects of language proficiency as relate to language minority students." Those aspects were:

- Models of Language Proficiency;
- Language Proficiency in the Bilingual Classroom; and
- Language Proficiency in the Bilingual Community.

Through the training, teachers were introduced to basic anthropological and ethnographic concepts related to language assessment, and were guided in the exploration of the nature of children's language proficiency in both classroom and community contexts. Sources of information included lectures, readings, and discussions.

Rivera and Simich describe Phase II of the training which was based on the theoretical and methodological issues introduced by Philips. Through the training, participants developed an ethnographic/sociolinguistic assessment instrument, the Teacher Observation System (TOS). More importantly, two major outcomes of the training were:

- a greater "awareness of the holistic nature of language;" and
- "changes in teachers' philosophy of education as reflected in their self-assessment of classroom organization and management practices."

Shana Poplack discusses findings of a series of ongoing studies of language maintenance and change in the bilingual community in East Harlem, New York in "Transcending Testing in Assessing Communicative Competence." The purpose of the first set of studies, she states, was to "ascertain whether Spanish was being maintained among the (500-600) adults in the community, what their feelings were regarding maintenance or loss, and whether and how the variety of Spanish they spoke has been affected by close contact with English." Data was collected by "means of long-term participant observation, detailed attitude questionnaires, and quantitative socio-linguistic analyses of selected linguistic features."

Poplack indicates that analysis of the data shows that:

- the adults in the community are bilingual to some degree;
- they believe "they speak good Spanish;"
- English and Spanish are not exclusively used with any domain;
- the majority of adults want their children to speak Spanish as a first language and/or acquire it simultaneously with English;
- "all sectors, school, family, and community, must share in the responsibility of maintaining Spanish;" and
- that "most younger Puerto Ricans of the third generation prefer English."

Poplack indicates that that data suggests "evidence of a language shift." In an effort to investigate this, a study of "the language distribution among . . . (16) children in the community" was undertaken. The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether English was in fact more predominant and what effects family, community and school have in "affecting maintenance and loss." Data was collected utilizing the same methodology as in the adult study. Findings indicate that "those developments which have been shown to hold synchronically in adult speech are being effectively transmitted to the younger generations." Poplack concludes that "the patterns of communication which are acquired early as well as positive attitudes toward learning and use of Spanish combined with the demographic facts ensure the perpetuation of bilingualism in the community."

In her presentation, "Studying Puerto Rican Children's Informal Education at Home," Jacob describes a study in progress of Puerto Rican children's skills education at home. The focus of the study was on the teaching and

learning of study skills in the home of twenty-nine children of middle and lower class levels attending kindergarten. Jacob reports preliminary results for the girls in the sample. In general, it was found that "most of the girls' literacy learning activities were self initiated and that this is consistent with the Puerto Rican concept of capacidad." School literacy artifacts play an important part in the girls' home literacy activities. The findings of the study, Jacob reports, "do not support the generalization from cross-cultural literature that observation is a primary method of informal education." They "do support the generalization that participatory learning is important" in this context.

Flora Rodriguez-Brown and Lucia Elias-Olivares use a discourse approach to language proficiency assessment by focusing on the use of questions in Spanish and English in "Linguistic Repertoires, Communicative Competence and the Hispanic Child." Using video and audio equipment, Rodriguez-Brown and Elias-Olivares observed nineteen (19) children from two classrooms consisting of white, black and Hispanic, English-speaking children along with a small group of Hispanic children with low English proficiency. The major finding of the research was that "questions are most often employed in the language in which the child is more proficient, and the questions are often determined by the type of setting or activity in which the children participate." Rodriguez-Brown and Elias-Olivares conclude by stating that a better understanding of children's communicative competence is gained "when the whole language repertoire of children is analyzed from an integrative perspective."

A framework for analyzing the discourse of English and Spanish speaking children is offered by Helen Slaughter and Adrian Bennett in "A Sociolinguistic/

Discourse Approach to the Description of the Communicative Competence of Linguistic Minority Children." Spanish and English communicative interactions of Anglo and Mexican-American students from Tucson Unified School District were taped and analyzed in an effort to develop a methodology for identifying, describing and evaluating those discourse variables by which participants negotiate, or fail to negotiate mutual understandings.

Slaughter and Bennett indicate that the study provided insight into the developmental acquisition of discourse skills and their relationship to language proficiency. For example, for kindergarten children they found that the evaluation of a child's proficiency must be based upon the meaning and comprehensibility of the child's utterances. It must also include consideration of the conversational context established within the elicitation process. For elementary children, grades 1-5, they focused their analysis on the adequacy of student-adult examiner dialogue and the student's extended discourse on a topic. The discourse features they found to be related to proficiency were: coherence and appropriateness of utterances, complementarity as a conversational partner, effective use of prosody, provision of adequate background information prior to point making, completeness of information, richness of complexity, flexibility and range of communicative competencies, point making and highlighting, summarizing and use of verb tenses in narrative discourse. Slaughter and Bennett conclude with the caution that:

> this sort of research needs to be supplemented by ethnographic observation, not only of the forms and uses of discourse in the classroom and school playground, but in other community environments as well. However, simply gathering more data on the forms of discourse in other settings is itself not enough to answer the question of what constitutes proficiency in a language. Rather, this sort of investigation itself needs to be framed in a larger investigation of the uses these forms are, or can be put to.

Policy and Educational Issues Relating to Entry/Exit Procedures

The last major theme which was addressed in the presentations related to issues in language proficiency assessment in a policy context. Several presenters discussed attempts made by school districts and state governments to comply with legal mandates with regard to bilingual education, while others considered the underlying social and political issues of establishing policy in this area.

Josue Gonzalez examines the social and political context of language proficiency assessment in "Political Issues and Language Assessment." After outlining reasons for which language proficiency assessment is necessary, Gonzalez suggests that two important questions with regard to language minority students should be kept in mind when establishing procedures for language assessment:

- "What are the rules under which language minority populations must play in order to participate most effectively in this society and (partake in) its benefits and responsibilities?"
- "How evenhanded do we want to be as a society about distributing things like power, resources, and prestige to different language groups?"

Gonzalez suggests that these and other important social questions underlie policy decisions in this area and advises that those involved in language proficiency assessment be aware of the social and political context within which they are working.

Future developments in the area of bilingual education are discussed from a legal perspective by Gabe Kaimowitz in "Some Random Legal Ramifications Affecting the Future of Bilingual Education in the United States." A brief

legislative history of bilingual education is given beginning with its roots in the Civil Rights legislation of the 1950's. Kaimowitz concludes that "there are sufficient laws and decisions on the books that will permit communities to fight for adequate bilingual education programs despite the displeasure expressed against them by public, press or government agencies." He goes on to state that legislation "exist(s) to provide authorization and reason for appropriation for (bilingual education) programs."

Two attempts to comply with government regulations concerning bilingual education are described by Mary Spencer and Maria Ortiz. In "A School District's Response to LAU," Ortiz gives an overview of Tucson Unified School District's (TUSD) initial efforts to comply with legislation governing bilingual education and then describes subsequent efforts to refine those efforts. She also gives her point of view with regard to the need for collaborative research and realistic educational policies.

She indicates that TUSD's initial plan for compliance involved identification and placement of several hundred non-native English speaking or bilingual students. The tests selected for the identification process were the School Language Inventory and the Language Dominance Instrument. The students identified as limited English proficient in grades K through 6 were placed in bilingual education programs while those in grades 7 through 12 were placed in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. The programs for both groups tended to be "compensatory" or "remedial." She points out that there were many problems due to lack of staff training and difficulties in establishing guidelines and procedures. The subsequent action taken to rectify the situation involved revision of questions on registration forms,

more staff training, formation of a task force for the review of procedures, the encouragement of the participation of parents and the refocusing of policy in bilingual education towards the needs of language minority students. Ortiz concludes by stressing the need for collaboration among teachers, practitioners and policymakers in order to be able to develop more effective measures of language proficiency assessment in meeting the needs of language-minority students.

Mary Spencer, in "Language Proficiency Assessment in California: Research and Deliberation Toward Better Solutions," describes the efforts of that state in providing for the needs of its language minority students. In attempting to comply with legal mandates, which address the educational needs of language minority students, the California State Department of Education found "that the state of instrumentation for the assessment of speaking, comprehending, reading, and writing in English as well as non-English languages was at a very nascent level." For this reason a review of instruments was undertaken. Those meeting minimal linguistic and psychometric standards were designated for use at the local district level, and recommendations for improving the quality of all tests reviewed were issued.

Following the first year survey, four instruments were "provisionally" designated for use: LAS (Language Assessment Scales); BINL (Basic Inventory of Natural Language); LAB (Language Assessment Battery); and BSM (Bilingual Syntax Measure). A more comprehensive review was later conducted of nineteen instruments using as criteria the validity and reliability of the tests. Other actions taken by the state were the sponsoring of new research in

language proficiency assessment and the development of assessment procedures for purposes of reclassification of students.

Edward de Avila discusses the role of tests of language proficiency in "Language Proficiency: Confusions, Paradoxes, and a Few Admonitions to Psychologists, Educators, Linguists and Other Developing Assessment Procedures for Language Minority Students." De Avila discusses:

- "low correlation between performance on currently available proficiency tests;
- relative ability of teachers to make global judgment of oral language proficiency; and
- the ability of proficiency measures to predict school achievement."

With regard to the first, De Avila cautions that "educators must guard against discarding what's known about language testing simply because test scores do not tell them all there's to know about language proficiency." In considering teachers' assessment of student's oral proficiency De Avila suggests that it is important to bear in mind that a teacher's linguistic background could very much affect a child's language proficiency evaluation. Thus he argues that "teacher judgment data must be subjected to the same vigors as any test procedure." With respect to the issue of the predictive validity language assessment instruments, he suggests that "It is more important to look at the kinds of proficiencies which contribute to academic achievement rather than to look at the plethora of social and linguistic 'competencies' which go to make up the child's general communicative abilities."

In conclusion, De Avila outlines what he considers important in order to develop a test which serves the needs of language minority children:

First, it is necessary to have a good knowledge of the domains and issues relating to language assessment, along with an understanding of the relationship between different linguistic dimensions of proficiency and overall competency.

Secondly, it is necessary to maintain an exchange of information and ideas among those individuals involved in the field of language proficiency assessment in order that new approaches or methodologies can be critiqued and improved to more effectively meet the needs of language minority students.

Thirdly, greater funding will be necessary in order to develop more effective measures of language proficiency. If possible, it should not involve the use of federal funds since this often means a loss of freedom to pursue objectives.

Fourth and lastly, courage and determination will be necessary. Language proficiency assessment is an area of education which is experiencing a great deal of reevaluation and innovation, and new ideas and approaches may require time to be accepted and tested. A certain amount of criticism will have to be endured by the designers of new instruments and by those suggesting new approaches to language proficiency assessment.

Summary of Symposium Themes

The final session of the Symposium consisted of a summary of the themes of the Symposium from both an anthropological and psycholinguistic perspective.

Muriel Saville-Troike, in "Anthropological-Linguistic Perspectives," focused on the issue of communicative competence and the problems involved in assessing it. She describes communicative competence as:

> . . . a body of knowledge and skills which involves not only the language code that they use, but also what they can say to whom, how they should say it appropriately in any given situation, and even when they should say nothing at all. It involves interaction skills such as knowing how they may develop conversations, and also knowing how to avoid becoming involved in a conversation if they prefer to be engaged in some other activity. It involves receptive as well as productive facility, written as well as oral modes of communication, and nonverbal as well as verbal behaviors. Communicative competence further involves having appropriate sociocultural schemata, or the social and cultural knowledge and expectations that speakers/hearers/readers/writers are presumed to have which enables them to use and interpret communicative forms. The concept of communicative competence must thus be embedded in the notion of cultural competence: interpreting the meaning of linguistic behavior requires knowing the cultural meaning of the context within which it occurs.

She acknowledges the importance of school-related skills in assessing children's language abilities. However, since they are only a part of a whole system of a child's abilities, she suggests that it is essential to gather data on children's language use in other contexts. With regard to the methods and instruments used in assessment, Saville-Troike advocates a naturalistic context for language assessment.

Testing students for the purpose of placement in appropriate programs and for the purpose of exiting them when they attain sufficient skills in

English were also discussed. On this topic, Saville-Troike states "If there is any question at all on the procedures and instruments that are used, districts must move in a more conservative direction. Students should be placed in native language support until there is time for more adequate and thorough testing to be sure they can handle English-only instruction." In the area of language development, she states that students should be given "the opportunity to learn, in interactive situations, how to do what they need to do with language." She concludes by cautioning that "the present emphasis on testing communicative competence may represent a bandwagon phenomenon" which is promising but which must be seen as complementary to psycholinguistic and psychometric means of assessing language proficiency.

In "Psycholinguistic Aspects," Fred Genesee explains that there has been a shift from grammatical competence to issues related to communicative competence. He indicates that one significant reason why the theme has emerged as important is that "improved methods of language proficiency and assessment, particularly those that take communicative competence into account, will improve (the) placement of non-English speaking or limited English speaking students in appropriate educational programs." He examines "the assumptions or expectations which underline the relationship that is being hypothesized between communicative competence and academic achievement or general school success." The assumptions are that:

- "the communicative competence of children in their primary language" can be characterized;
- "children who do not possess the requisite communicative competence in classroom language usage . . . can be taught these competencies; and

- "academic achievement in school is necessary and/or substantially related to communicative competence and language proficiency in general."

With regard to the first assumption, Genesee indicates that although many issues remain to be resolved before "communicative models of language proficiency can presently be applied meaningfully and usefully in bilingual education" the theoretical and empirical work discussed at the Symposium as well as the other research undertaken in monolingual classrooms indicates progress.

Concerning the assessment of communicative competence, Genesee states that there are three major issues that must be dealt with in developing tests of communicative competence:

- "the authenticity or face validity of communicative competence;
- Their representativeness or situational generalizability;
- The definition of proficiency levels."

On teaching communicative competence, Genesee reports that despite the lack of a strong theoretical base, "communication-oriented educational programs have been found to be relatively successful at least within limits set by school settings." Finally, in regard to the relationship between communicative competence and academic achievement, he believes that the issue is not whether a relationship exists but, rather, the extent of that relationship. He adds that, "greater attention needs to be paid to the potential influence of other non-language factors, alone and in interaction with language proficiency."

Genesee concludes by stating that although many "unresolved theoretical and psychometric issues" remain, before tests of communicative competence

can be effectively used in bilingual education programs, it is imperative to undertake this approach.

Bernard Spolsky concluded the Symposium by offering a more philosophical perspective on the issue of language testing and related topics in "The Uses of Language Tests: An Ethical Envoi." Spolsky states that those individuals involved in language testing have experienced the realization that neither the ways of the past nor the innovations of more recent history have provided satisfactory solutions to the many problems arising out of attempts to improve language proficiency assessment. New solutions have brought with them other more serious problems. For example, the advantage of the traditional system of testing lies in the fact that the process involves direct contact between two human beings; the candidate is seen as an individual rather than a name on a piece of paper. Yet, this approach is based on "the assumption that certain people have the authority to make judgments about others." The system only works, Spolsky states, "as long as the authority of the judges or examiners is not questioned." The modern or psychometric-structuralist approach to language testing places more emphasis on the reliability of tests, their objectivity and the degree to which they lend themselves to statistical analysis. In this way, it is believed, authority is afforded by virtue of the tests' objectivity. However, the insistence on objectivity most often results in a much more dehumanized process, in which a child is assessed by a system or a computer rather than another human being who can make a more global assessment of his or her skills. The last approach which Spolsky examines is what he calls the post-modern or psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach which "grew out of questions raised by the various disciplines about what it means to know and

to use language." Rather than reducing language to discrete components, this approach attempts to deal with language in larger, more natural contexts. It is an acknowledgement of the fact that none of the solutions to effective language testing which have been offered in the past is perfect, that assessing an individual's language skills is a much more complex process than previously believed. Thus, Spolsky states "we are ready, it seems to me, to live with the fact that there is not ever going to be a cheap, quick, reliable and valid test of a human being's knowledge of language."

Therefore, Spolsky indicates regardless of the approach taken, the designers and users of tests have three primary responsibilities:

- to avoid certainty: anyone who claims to have a perfect test, or to be prepared to make an important decision on the basis of a single test result is acting irresponsibly;
- to avoid mysticism: avoid hiding behind authority, technical jargon or statistics; and
- to make sure that tests, like dangerous drugs are accurately labelled and used with considerable care.

Suggesting that the issues and problems discussed at the Symposium are more problems of teaching than problems of testing, Spolsky explains that, "the ideal teacher will go over everything as many times as a student needs, and the ideal school system that is seeking to let every pupil develop the best of his or her potential will find it comparatively easy to learn all it needs to know about that pupil's progress without elaborate testing methods." Spolsky summarized the conclusions and reactions of the participants to the issues discussed at the Symposium in this way:

> Most of the participants in the conference, whether researchers or practitioners, chafed at the restriction to "measurement," at the need to sort and classify the pupils, and evidenced a healthy and hopeful desire to understand more about them through new methods of assessing their proficiency as speakers and listeners and readers and writers. In this way, they have made their contribution to the movement for responsible, learner-oriented use of language tests. Such an approach deserves encouragement and support.

Summary of Participants Understandings and Recommendations

The final session provided a structure for participants to comment from the perspective of the three representative groups -- researchers, practitioners and policymakers -- as to the extent to which the goals of the Symposium were met. They summarized their understandings of the various issues which affect language proficiency assessment practices and made practical suggestions and recommendations. It was believed that each group, because of its unique role in the field, would be able to bring different insights into the discussion of the stated goals of the LPA Symposium. The following is a report on the conclusions reached and the recommendations of each group as a result of their participation in the Symposium.

Researchers. The researchers indicated that a major issue of concern was that of clarifying the construct of communicative competence and its relationship to language proficiency. It was recognized that, at present there are multiple interpretations of the construct at both the theoretical and applied levels. Views of participants to the LPA Symposium ranged from relating communicative competence only to those cognitive and communication skills required for school learning, while ignoring socioculturally-related language skills, to the recognition that cognitive and language socialization skills may be manifested in culturally different ways, and can serve as a foundation for school learning. In recognition of the diversity of perspectives regarding communicative competence, the researchers agreed that there is a pressing need for more basic research which can provide

the foundation for both clarifying and expanding the concept of communicative competence and its relationship to language proficiency.

The researchers emphasized the need for applied research which expands on current knowledge of language proficiency. In view of the limited availability of valid and appropriate language proficiency instruments, there was particular concern that validation studies be undertaken.

The fact that the range of social and academic uses of language may not be evidenced when multilingual/multicultural children are tested through traditional methods prompted the researchers to support the development of multiple language assessment strategies. They agreed that such strategies should include both qualitative and quantitative components. The use of sociolinguistic/ethnographic approaches such as teacher observations and student self-reports were suggested as variations which should be seriously studied. The use of separate yet parallel language proficiency measures in both the native (L_1) and the second (L_2) languages was also strongly supported.

The state of the art of language proficiency assessment, the researchers concurred, is one of reassessment and new directions. This prompted them to advise that any federal guidelines which are established to guide language proficiency assessment practices should be adaptable. Adaptability, they indicated, is essential in order to allow educators and researchers to continue in their efforts to develop new strategies for the assessment of language proficiency through expanded research into the nature of language and methods for its measurement. Any federal guidelines which are established

must, in their opinion, allow for the inclusion of new findings which may alter the perspective with regard to language proficiency assessment practices.

In order to share research findings and to coordinate efforts in the development of more effective language proficiency measures, it was proposed that yearly meetings of practitioners and researchers be established. The purpose of these meetings would be to focus on issues related to the ongoing development of meaningful and appropriate language proficiency assessment strategies enabling those in attendance to incorporate into their respective areas of concern new information and practical field experience. Briefly, the primary concerns of the researchers were the following:

- the need for basic research into the nature of language that can provide the foundation for clarifying the concept of communicative competence and its relationship to language proficiency;
- the need for applied research which expands on current understanding of the state of the art of language proficiency assessment;
- the need to undertake validation studies of currently available language proficiency assessment instruments;
- the development of multiple language assessment strategies which include both quantitative and qualitative components;
- the need for adaptable government guidelines which affect language proficiency assessment practices; and
- the need for yearly meetings between researchers and practitioners to exchange information and ideas.

Practitioners. The need for a working definition of communicative competence was seen as central to the issue of language proficiency assessment. The participants stated that there should be at least some agreement among

practitioners as to the nature of communicative competence and its relationship to language proficiency. They stressed that any attempt to describe communicative competence should be broad enough in scope to recognize each child's culturally acquired communicative skills and their relationship to learning in school settings. Language proficiency tests, they agreed, often focus on linguistic aspects of language and ignore other socioculturally-related language skills which a child may possess when he or she enters school.

The practitioners emphasized that federal guidelines affecting language proficiency assessment practices and strategies should be practical as well as adaptable. They indicated that any federal guidelines which are established should allow local school districts the freedom to select alternative strategies from among several well-researched options in attempting to meet the needs of the children served by programs in those districts. Adaptability, they stressed, is important because of the need to provide a means of incorporating, into government policy, research findings concerning the nature of communicative competence and its reality-based implications with regard to language proficiency assessment practices.

The practitioners also emphasized that research should be a collaborative effort between practitioners and researchers. The development of a network of communication among researchers, policymakers and practitioners for the purpose of identifying issues related to language proficiency which need to be researched was strongly supported. Many of the practitioners indicated that they feel isolated because they generally are not consulted or provided with up-to-date information concerning new developments in the

measurement of the language proficiency of language minority students: As examples of the kinds of steps which can be taken to make this information more available, the practitioners encouraged more extensive use of the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) for the collection, publication, and dissemination of information on language proficiency assessment practices. They also supported the development and implementation of in-service teacher training programs which focus on language proficiency assessment issues. In addition, they recommended more frequent information exchanges between researchers, practitioners and policymakers. The LPA Symposium, they indicated, was a model of the type of collaboration which should be promoted.

The practitioners emphasized the need for government agencies such as NIE and the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA), to continue to support and encourage more applied collaborative research. One such method of encouragement which was strongly suggested was to include as criteria in Requests for Proposals (RFPs) the participation of practitioners at the local level.

In short, the major issues identified by the practitioners were:

- the need for a working definition of communicative competence which clarifies its relationship to language proficiency;
- the establishment of practical as well as adaptable federal guidelines affecting language proficiency assessment practices;
- the importance of maintaining a network of communication between practitioners and researchers;
- the importance of obtaining up-to-date information on language proficiency assessment practices through more extensive use of resources such as the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE);

- the use of the LPA Symposium as a model for future meetings among practitioners, researchers and policymakers involved in language proficiency assessment practices which affect language minority students; and

- the support of federal agencies in encouraging collaboration between researchers and practitioners in applied research efforts.

Policymakers. The participants in this group acknowledged the need for adaptable federal guidelines that would provide a structure on which to base the development of procedures for language proficiency assessment practices. Adaptability, they agreed, is essential in order to support practitioners and researchers in their efforts to clarify:

- what is meant by language; and
- how it should be measured.

Thus, the policymakers were in support of federal guidelines which allow for the incorporation of relevant research findings that may change the practical application of language proficiency assessment practices.

The policymakers recognized the need for federal agencies such as NIE and OBEMLA to continue to promote applied research which explores the nature of language. Research findings, they agreed, should provide the basis for developing more appropriate and effective methods for assessing the language proficiency of language minority students. In addition, they agreed that research should be a collaborative effort between practitioners and researchers.

In summary, the issues of most importance, as seen by the policymakers, were:

- the need to establish federal guidelines which can be adapted to accommodate relevant research findings that have bearing

on the practical application of language proficiency assessment practices;

- the need for federal agencies to continue to support applied research on issues related to language proficiency assessment through grants and other forms of funding; and
- the need for federal agencies to support research which is carried out as a joint venture on the part of researchers and practitioners.

In conclusion, participants at the Symposium represented a wide range of perspectives with regard to theoretical and practical applications of research in the area of language proficiency assessment. The major issue of defining the concept of communicative competence and its relationship to language proficiency proved to be difficult because of the diversity of viewpoints, theories and research findings concerning the nature of language. It was evident that some agreement among researchers and practitioners along with much more conclusive information about the nature of language and how it should be measured would be necessary to clarify the concept of communicative competence and its relationship to language proficiency assessment.

The participants recognized the limitations of currently-available measures of language proficiency. They concurred that traditional methods of testing language proficiency were both unreliable and limited in scope with regard to the types of skills they assess and in their failure to recognize the culturally-related skills that minority language students possess.

A general disenchantment with traditional measures prompted researchers and practitioners to recommend the implementation of validation studies of currently-used measures. In view of this dissatisfaction, participants

also endorsed the further exploration of alternative modes of testing communicative competence/language proficiency including the development of innovative approaches such as the sociolinguistic/ethnographic perspective.

In order to be able to work effectively toward the resolution of major issues addressed at the Symposium, the participants recommended the coordination of efforts between researchers and practitioners through the establishment of a network of communication and information exchanges. Yearly meetings, the publication and dissemination of new findings (journals, newsletters, etc), and teacher-training programs were some of the methods recommended for maintaining a network of cooperation.

Publication Dissemination Plan for the LPA Symposium Proceedings

The plan for the LPA Symposium proceedings is to publish them in the form of four monographs through the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). Papers from the Symposium have undergone editing and have been organized according to major issues addressed at the Symposium. In Appendix: III-A is found a listing of the monographs and their contents.

Because of the nature of the monographs, CAL was selected as the publisher. CAL is an organization which has a long history of successful publications for linguists, ESL teachers, teacher trainers, and bilingual researchers and educators.

The agreement which has been reached with CAL is that the four monographs will be published on or before June 30, 1982. Volumes will be published as both hard and paperback 6X9 books. In the first printing, 2,000 copies of each volume will be published, 200-500 in hardback and the rest in paperback. The monographs will be cross referenced with CAL's:

- Testing Series;
- the Bilingual Education Series; and
- the Language and Ethnography Series;

in their catalogue of publications which is currently disseminated to 70,000 individuals, institutions and libraries. Quarterly, mailings of their new publications, including the monographs will be sent out to targeted audiences. In addition, they plan to send exhibits which will include the monographs to some 22 conventions and meetings in 1982 and 1983.

APPENDIX: III-A

ALPBP Project Monograph Contents

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Studying Puerto Rican Children's Information Education at Home
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Transcending Testing in Assessing Communicative Competence
Shana Poplack. . . . . .

A Sociolinguistic/Discourse Approach to the Description of the Communicative Competence of Linguistic Minority Children
Bennett & Slaughter. . . . . .

An Ethnographic Approach to Bilingual Language Proficiency Assessment
Susan U. Philips . . . . . .

Ethnographic/Sociolinguistic Issues and the Assessment of Bilingual Students, Language Proficiency
Charlene Rivera and Carmen Simich. . . . . .

Anthropological Linguistic Perspective: Summary
Muriel Saville-Troike. . . . . .

Linguistic Repertoires, Communicative Competence and the Hispanic Child
Flora Rodriguez-Brown and Lucia Elias-Olivares . . . . . .

Graphic Sense and its Effects on the Acquisition of Literacy
Eduardo Hernandez-Chavez . . . . . .

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The Measurement of Communicative Proficiency: Models & Application

Some Comments on the Terminology of Language Tests
Bachman & Palmer . . . . . .

The Suitability of Bilingual Education for Children with Special Needs
Margaret Bruck . . . . . .

A Communicative Approach to Language Proficiency Assessment in a Minority Setting
Michael Canale . . . . . .

Problems in Assessment and Evaluation of Child Language Proficiency in Native American Bilingual Schools
Steve Chesarek . . . . . .

Linguistic Interdependence among Japanese Immigrant Students
Jim Cummins. . . . . .

Some Implications of Communicative Competence Research for Integrative Proficiency Testing
Richard Duran. . . . . .

Pupil Characteristics and Performance on Linguistic and Communicative Language Measures
Arnulfo Ramirez. . . . . .

Future Perspectives on Research in Oral Language Proficiency Assessment
Ellen Rosansky . . . . . .

Communicative Competence: Analysis of Models, Characteristics and Program Implications
Wallat & Knott . . . . . .

The Relationship Between Native and Second Language Reading Comprehension and Second Language Oral Ability
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Psycholinguistic Aspects
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Language Proficiency and Academic Achievement

Wanted: A Theoretical Framework for Relating Language Proficiency to Academic Achievement among Bilingual Students
Jim Cummins. . . . . .

Response to Cummins: Wanted: A Theoretical Framework for Relating Language Proficiency to Academic Achievement among Bilingual Students
Fred Genesee . . . . . .

On Some Theoretical Frameworks for Language Proficiency
Michael Canale . . . . . .

A Note on the Dangers of Terminological Innovation
Bernard Spolsky. . . . . .

SCALP: Social and Cultural Aspects of Language Proficiency
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Identifying and Placing the Limited English Proficient Student
Sylvia Pena . . . . . .

Native Language Assessment of Asian-American Students
Rosita Galang . . . . . .

Policy Issues in Language Assessment
Josue Gonzalez. . . . . .

Language Proficiency Assessment in California: Research and Deliberation Toward Better Solutions
Mary Spencer. . . . . .

The Uses of Language Tests: An Ethical Envoi
Bernard Spolsky . . . . . .

A School District's Response to LAU
Maria Ortiz . . . . . .

Some Random Legal Ramifications Affecting the Future of Bilingual Education in the United States
Gabe Kaimowitz. . . . . .

"Limited" Language Proficiency of Mexican-American 3rd Grade Students: A Problem in the Definition and Measurement of Bilingualism
Zoe Ann Hayes . . . . . .